

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 NOUAKC 00177 261046Z

10

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
----- 030823

P R 241103Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5010

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID

/AMEMBASSY RABAT 395

S E C R E T NOUAKCHOTT 0177

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MASS SS MR AG MO

SUBJECT: SAHARA WATCH: MAURITANIAN REQUEST FOR ARMS

REF: A. NOUAKCHOTT 34 B. NOUAKCHOTT 157 C. NOUAKCHOTT 168  
D. NOUAKCHOTT 169 (ALL NOTAL)

1. REGIME INTIMATE 'ABD AR-RAHMAAN OULD DADDAH SOUGHT OUT DCM  
JANUARY 22 TO URGE USG TO RESPOND FAVORABLY AND QUICKLY TO  
GIRM'S REQUEST FOR ARMS (REF A). 'ABD AR-RAHMAAN DECLARED:  
(A) ALGERIA HAD DESTROYED PRIVILEGED POSITION IT HAD ENJOYED FOR  
SO LONG IN MAURITANIA, AND COULD NOT EXPCET TO RECOVER IN LESS  
THAN TEN YEARS; (B) SITUATION IS WIDE OPEN FOR US TO MOVE IN  
AND BECOME CLOSE POLITICAL PARTNER OF MAURITANIA; (C) US CAN TAKE  
AND HOLD NEW POSITION OF SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE BY MOVING IN NEXT  
FEW WEEKS TO DEMONSTRATE PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR MAURITANIA IN CONTEXT  
SAHARA; (D) IDEAL VEHICLE FOR DEMONSTRATING US READINESS TO SUPPORT  
MAURITANIA IN CRUNCH IS GRANT ARMS PROGRAM. 'ABD AR-  
RAHMAAN EXPLICITLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT MAURITANIA HAD NEVER  
DONE MUCH TO HELP USG OR TO EARN US SUPPORT IN PRESENT  
TIME OF TROUBLE. HE NEVERTHELESS URGED US TO LOOK TO  
FUTURE RATHER THAN OVER OUR SHOULDERS TO PAST. HE ASSERT-  
ED GIRM HAD DECIDED TO PUT ARMS AID REQUEST TO USG IN ORDER

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 NOUAKC 00177 261046Z

TO GUAGE US INTEREST IN AND WILLINGNESS TO WORK WITH MAURI-

TANIA, AND OBSERVED GIRM COULD EASILY PURCHASE MODEST AMOUNT OF EQUIPMENT IT HAD REQUESTED. 'ABD AR-RAHMAAN POINTED OUT THAT US DECISION TO LIMIT ITS ASSISTANCE TO FACILITATION OF PURCHASE VS GRANT AID WOULD EARN A "FAIL" GRADE IN POLITICAL TEST. DCM REDNTED IN MOST PESSIMISTIC POSSIBLE VEIN ON QUESTION OF GRANT ARMS AID, POINTING DISCOURAGING PICTURE OF POLITICAL AND BUREAUCRATIC COMPLEXISITES OF ATTEMPT TO ADD NEW AFRICAN AND ARAB COUNTRY TO LIST OF MAP RECIPIENTS AT THIS TIME. HE THEN SUGGESTED CHANCES OF ASSISTANCE IN ECONOMIC FIELD WERE MUCH BETTER, AND SOUGHT OULD DADDDAH'S REACTION TO POLITICAL EFFICACY OF GRANT FOOD PROGRAM FOR SAHRAWIS. AFTER REFLECTING FOR MOMENT, 'ABD AR-RAHMAAN DECIDED THAT GRANT FOOD PROGRAM WOULD BE ALMOST AS EFFECTIVE AS ARMS AID AS DEMONSTRATION OF US SUPPORT, BUT ONLY IF IT WERE CLEARLY, EXPLICITLY, AND PUBLICLY AIMED AT SAHRAWIS, AND ONLY IF IT APPEARED TO SUPPORT, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, MAURITANIAN SAHARA POLICY.

2. WHILE 'ABD AR-RAHMAAN CAREFULLY DID NOT SPECIFY, HE LEFT DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT HE WAS SPEAKING ON BEHALF SENIOR LEVELS OF GIRM. DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT 'ABD AR-RAHMAAN OULD DADDDAH IS COUSIN OF PRESIDENT, FRIEND AND CONFIDANT OF MINSTATE FOR FORMUGN AFFAIRS OULD MOUKNASS, AND CLASSMATE AND CLOSE FRIEND OF MINSTATE FOR NATIONAL ECONOMY SIDI 'ABDALLAHI AND GIRM AMBASSADOR TO US OULD 'ABDALLAH, AND THAT HE HAS BEEN USED BEFORE AS INFORMAL GO-BETWEEN.

3. DESPITE OULD DADDDAH APPROACH, I STILL BELIEVE THAT BEST SOLUTION BY FAR IS SALE ON CONCESSIONARY CREDIT TERMS OF MOST TIF NOT ALL 50S PLUS FULL QUANTITY AMMO REQUESTED COUPLED WITH ALL-OUT USG EFFORT TO FACILITATE PURCHASE, LICENSING, AND SHIPMENT. I REMAIN SKEPTICAL THAT MODEST QUANTITY OF ARMS AID--OR EVEN MAJOR MAP PROGRAM--WOULD PROVE TO BE GOLDEN KEY TO NEW POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THIRD-WORLDING, ARAB GIRM. MOREOVER, I AM NOT AT ALL SURE THAT NEW RELATIONSHIP BUILT ON ARMS AID IS PARTICULARLY HEALTHY IN ANY CONTEXT, AND ESPECIALLY NOT RPT NOT IN CONTEXT PRESENT-DAY MAURITANIAN WHERE  
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 NOUAKC 00177 261046Z

AN INCREASING NUMBER OF MOORS IN ADDITION TO BLACKS ARE BECOMING ACTIVELY DISENCHANTED WITH THE ADVERSE HUMAN, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S SAHARA ADVENTURE. (INTERESTINGLY, NEITHER DISENCHANTMENT NOR BLACK-MOOR SPLIT ON SAHARA IS EVIDENT WITHIN ARMED FORCES.) IN CONTRAST, GRANT FOOD AID PROGRAM PUBLICLY DESIGNED TO BENEFIT SAHRAWIS MIGHT MATCH ARMS AID IN POLITICAL IMPACT, AND CONCEIVABLY COULD BE EVEN MORE

EFFECTIVE MEANS TO DEMONSTRATE US SUPPORT OF A HARD-PRESSED MAURITANIA. IN ADDITION, GIVEN VERY MODEST NUMBERS OF PEOPLE IN MAURITANIAN SAHARA, FOOD PROGRAM MIGHT NOT BE MUCH MORE COSTLY. FURTHERMORE, IT WOULD HAVE VIRTUE OF BEING A USEFUL AND WORTHY ACTIVITY IN AND OF ITSELF WHETHER OR NOT IT PRODUCED SOUGHT-AFTER POLITICAL PAYOFF. FINALLY, I CONTINUE TO BELIEVE WE SHOULD MADE ANY CONTRIBUTION WE CHOOSE TO MAKE TO MAURITANIA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VIA DIRECT INPUTS TO THE DEVELOPMENT EFFORT.

4. DESPITE COMPLEXITY OF ISSUES INVOLVED IN GIRM ARMS REQUEST AND NEED TO PROCEED CAUTIOUSLY AND WITH EXTREME CARE THROUGH POLITICAL MINE FIELD SURROUNDING ARMS AID/SALES DECISIONS, I VERY MUCH HOPE THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO RESPOND VERY SOON IN SOME FASHION TO GIRM REQUEST. ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF FACT THAT TWO OF SIDI 'ABDALLAH'S FOUR WEEKS HAVE ALREADY GONE BY. HANDYSIDE

SECRET

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** MILITARY ASSISTANCE, FOREIGN RELATIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 24 JAN 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** coburnhl  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976NOUAKC00177  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760029-0007  
**From:** NOUAKCHOTT  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19760125/aaaaavpq.tel  
**Line Count:** 133  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION SS  
**Original Classification:** SECRET  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** SECRET  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Reference:** 76 NOUAKCHOTT 34, 76 NOUAKCHOTT 157, 76 NOUAKCHOTT 168  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** coburnhl  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 12 MAY 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <12 MAY 2004 by MartinML>; APPROVED <01 SEP 2004 by coburnhl>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SAHARA WATCH: MAURITANIAN REQUEST FOR ARMS  
**TAGS:** PFOR, MASS, SS, MR, AG, MO, (OULD DADDAH, ABD AR-RAHMAAN)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006